

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1 9. (currently amended) Installation for making a
2 nonwoven textile web comprising:
3 - extruding means comprising at least one extruder for
4 feeding a melted organic polymer to a spinneret for producing
5 a curtain of filaments, cooling means including a cooling
6 zone for providing at least surface solidification of said
7 filaments, a filament-drawing assembly including a suction
8 device comprising a narrow chamber of rectangular cross-
9 section in which said curtain of filaments is drawn by high-
10 speed air streams, said chamber having an adjustable width
11 and extending to a chamber outlet for emitting drawn
12 filaments, distributing means for deflecting and slowing air
13 streams at the chamber outlet and for distributing the
14 filaments homogeneously over a receiving belt, said extruding
15 means, cooling means, filament-drawing assembly and
16 distributing means being separately controllable and
17 independently adjusted during start-up and continuous
18 operation.

1 10. (previously presented) Installation according to
2 claim 9, in which the cooling means and the filament-drawing
3 assembly each comprise a plurality of elementary modules
4 placed side by side, the distributing means extending along
5 the entire width of the web produced.

1 11. (previously presented) Installation according to
2 claim 9, in which the cooling zone comprises an assembly
3 having a plurality of successive zones for subjecting the
4 curtain of filaments to a transverse air current, the speed
5 and temperature of which may be adjusted independently in
6 each of the zones.

1 12. (currently amended) Installation according to
2 claim 9, in which ~~the suction device has a suction slot, the~~
3 said chamber width ~~of which~~ may be adjusted automatically
4 according to the production of the machine.

1 13. (previously presented) Installation according to
2 claim 9, in which the distributing means is spaced from the
3 filament drawing assembly and comprises an assembly which
4 laterally deflects the air flow, reducing the speed thereof
5 and that of the filaments, and facilitating the uniform
6 deposition on the receiving belt by eliminating any rebound
7 at the moment of this deposition.

1 14. (previously presented) Installation according to
2 claim 13, in which the distributing means is associated with
3 an assembly which electrostatically charges the said
4 filaments before deposition on the receiving belt.

1 15. (previously presented) Installation according to
2 claim 9, further including computer means for controlling the
3 extruder means, the cooling means, the filament-drawing
4 assembly and the distributing means, making it possible to
5 bring about the increase in speed of the production line
6 automatically.

16. Cancelled

1 17. (new) A method for making a nonwoven textile web
2 wherein extruded filaments are passed through successive
3 cooling zones, drawn by high-speed air streams in a drawing
4 assembly having a suction slot for said filaments and drawn
5 filaments are homogeneously deposited over a receiving belt
6 by distributing the filaments to form said nonwoven textile
7 web, comprising the steps of:

8 a) extruding a melted organic polymer through a
9 spinneret to form said filaments at an elevated temperature;

10 b) during a start-up phase, passing said filaments at a
11 start-up speed and at said elevated temperature through said
12 successive cooling zones, contacting said filaments with
13 transverse flows of air at relatively lower temperatures in
14 each of said cooling zones, and controlling the speed of the
15 transverse flow of air in each zone to a value between
16 0.5m/second and 3m/second; and

17 c) during a following production phase, increasing the
18 speed of the filaments progressively from said start-up speed
19 to a higher production speed, and regulating the temperature
20 and speed of said transverse flows of air in said cooling
21 zones to:

- 22 • increase the air speed in a first successive
23 zone, the temperature remaining unchanged,
 - 24 • increase the temperature in a second
25 successive zone to bring it to the level of
26 that of the first zone and increase the air
27 speed in this zone,
 - 28 • increase the air temperature in a third
29 successive zone and increase the air speed in
30 this zone,
- 31 simultaneously, progressively reducing the width
32 of said suction slot to attain a nominal operating
33 width, with the pressure of the drawing air being
34 progressively increased; and

35 d) homogeneously depositing the drawn filaments emitted
36 from said suction slot over said receiving belt to form said
37 nonwoven textile web.

1 18. (new) The method of claim 17, wherein said suction
2 slot has an outlet opening from which said drawn filaments
3 are emitted and said step of homogeneously depositing said
4 drawn filaments over said receiving belt includes deflecting
5 and slowing said drawing air at said suction slot opening.

1 19. (new) The method of claim 18, wherein said steps
2 of filament extruding, cooling, drawing and distributing are
3 independently controlled during said start-up and production
4 phases.

1 20. (new) The method of claim 19, wherein said
2 distributing step includes applying an electrostatic charge
3 to said drawn filaments.

1 21. (new) Installation for making a nonwoven textile
2 web comprising:

- 3 • at least one extruder for a melted organic polymer
- 4 feeding a spinneret for producing a curtain of filaments,
- 5 • a cooling zone for bringing about at least surface
- 6 solidification of said extruded filaments,

7 • a suction slot in the form of a narrow chamber of
8 rectangular cross-section having a suction outlet, inside
9 which the curtain of filaments is subjected to the action of
10 high-speed air streams causing said to be drawn;
11 • means for deflecting and slowing down the air flow at
12 the suction outlet of the drawing slot and for distributing
13 the filaments homogeneously over a receiving belt;
14 characterized in that there is provided means for adjusting
15 the width of the suction slot.

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached sheet of drawings includes changes to Fig. 3. This sheet, which includes Figs. 2 and 3, replaces the original sheet including Figs. 2 and 3. Fig. 3 is amended to include adjustment device 10a.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet

Annotated Sheet Showing Changes